



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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Fatality in Sequoia National Park

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, CA – On Monday, September 2, 2013, the body of Yukio Kato, a 60-year old man from Torrance, CA, was recovered in Sequoia National Park by the National Park Service, in cooperation with the Inyo County Sheriff's Office, Inyo National Forest, and Tulare County Sheriff's Office. On September 1, 2013, at approximately 1:30 p.m., Kato fell approximately 200 feet over a cliff from the Mount Whitney Trail to his death. The incident happened approximately 1 mile from Mount Whitney at 13,500 feet above sea level while Kato was on the way back to the Whitney Portal trailhead. Earlier in the day, Kato and three other people hiked from the Whitney Portal trailhead in the Inyo National Forest to the summit of Mount Whitney.

The Dispatch Office at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks received the initial report of the incident from the Inyo County Sheriff's Department at approximately 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 1. At approximately 4:40 p.m. the same day, the National Park Service dispatched a contract helicopter and a park medic to the accident scene, while nearby U.S. Forest Service wilderness rangers walked with other members of the hiking party back to the Whitney Portal trailhead.

Due to limited daylight hours, the body recovery was scheduled for Monday, September 2. A mountaineering technical rescue team of four park rangers from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks was sent to recover the body.

The cause of the fall is under investigation. Weather is not considered to be a factor.

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